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Newark Association Committee of Concern

N. J. DIVISION
NEWARK LIBRARY

August 3, 1967

Malcolm D. Talbott, Vice President
Rutgers University
Newark Division
31 Fulton Street
Newark, New Jersey

Dear Malcolm:

I do not know if I would have talked to you before you receive this note. I did try to reach you on Tuesday, as your secretary probably advised you, and tried to make a luncheon date for that day or possibly for Friday.

Judging by the Monday night meeting, I can fully understand that you were busy during the day making your necessary 'phone calls, and that you did not have time to call me back.

At the same time as I suggested to you the other night, I have some very definite ideas on procedure along certain lines which might strongly support and develop the position of the Committee of Concern and to help it make significant contribution to the welfare of the City of Newark.

If by the time you receive this note we have not arranged to meet, lets do so. May I suggest that you be my guest at lunch at the convenient Roost, I can generally arrange this with some advance notice.

I would like to get together with you soon if possible before next Monday's meeting. Can it be arranged? As I am out of my office a good deal, I will again try to reach you on the 'phone.

Very truly yours,

Abraham J. Isserman

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N. J. DIVISION
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August 10, 1967

Malcolm D. Talbott, Vice President
Rutgers University
Newark Division
53 Washington Street
Newark, New Jersey

Dear Malcolm:

It was fortuitous that I was able to get you on the 'phone while I was having lunch with John Bebout at the faculty center in New Brunswick. I do hope to be able to confer with you this week, (either Thursday or Friday) as the subject matter of our discussion requires consideration, decision, and action in the near future.

Since the inception of the riots I have been deeply concerned over the possible trend of the various announced investigations and the weight of official testimony putting the blame of the riots on the Negro people, their leaders and so called "agitators" and ignoring the root causes of the ghetto explosions, the long history of police oppression in the slum areas and the provocations, and the indiscriminate and excessive use of violence in many instances. There will be no dearth of testimony concerning the rioting and the rioters and advocating sterner measures of oppression. On the other hand it will be necessary for the Committee of Concern and other civic groups to bring balance and sanity to these hearings by emphasis on the points above mentioned and by the presentation of constructive solutions.

Only this evening (Monday) on T.V. I heard the testimony of a Newark Police officer, Leonard Kowalawski, given before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, in which amongst other things he blamed CORE for instigating the riots and insisted that the police were hampered in their work of suppression by restrictive orders emanating from the Mayor. It wasn't

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clear from of what I saw and heard, how he got to Washington to testify, but there was avid support of his position by a number of the Senators.

At the July 31, 1967 meeting the Legal Affairs Committee of the Committee of Concern adopted a resolution, which though not expertly formulated, authorized the presentation of evidence on behalf of the Committee before legislative before "any legislative, administrative, or investigating body, federal, state, or local," the purpose of which is to investigate causes or circumstances of any riot or into "community conditions which may be at the root of the riots,"

In addition the Legal Affairs Committee itself recommended that the Committee of Concern hold its own hearings on the Newark riots.

I enclose a copy of my letter of July 20, 1967 to Dr. Blakeley of The Presbytery of Newark. My conference with him arranged through the national office of the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. had been set before the riots and was to concern itself solely with the question of housing in the city of Newark to be erected under the State or National Federal Financing Programs, by non-profit sponsors.

The riots, however gave a sense of urgency to our conference, in the course of which I offered my services on a volunteer basis to assist in the gathering and presentation of evidence at the various hearings which were being proposed. Of course I offer still stands, and I repeat it here as a member of the Committee of Concern and its Legal Affairs Committee.

May I suggest that we discuss this further at our forthcoming conference.

You will note that the balance of my letter dealt with housing for the city of Newark and was critical of the proposed plan to appropriate so much of the slum area for hospital purposes without compensating development of housing for the persons to be displaced and even for the hospital workers themselves. Since that time the hospital situation has become

M.D. Talbott

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August 10, 1967

obscure. I have read that some housing would be built in connection with the project, and then again that it would not be. Be that as it may it might well be the promise of the Committee of Concern to examine the hospital situation and to make recommendations in respect thereto. I doubt if the issue is finally closed.

Here to I would volunteer to assist, possibly in^{er} listing the aid of one of more of my clients and associates who are experts in this field.

Perhaps this too can be on our agenda, as well as such other matters as you might want to discuss.

As I will be out of my office, and out of town all of Tuesday and part of Wednesday, I will 'phone your office Wednesday afternoon to arrange for our meeting.

Sincerely,

Abraham J. Isserman

aji/hz

P.S. Apparently there was a meeting on the 7th, but it was a meeting of the Legal Affairs Committee only. From your statement that there was no meeting of the Committee on Concern that night, I mistakenly assumed that the meeting of the Legal Affairs Committee was also not scheduled. In the interest of time, this letter is being sent before I will have an opportunity to check it. So please forgive any errors which you may find.

A.J.I.

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August 15, 1967

Rev. John Seabrook
Grace Episcopal Church
950 Broad Street
Newark, New Jersey

Dear Rev. Seabrook:

I am sorry that I missed the meeting of the Legal Affairs Committee on August 7, 1967. Unfortunately my inadvertence, I was lead to believe that the meeting would not take place as scheduled.

In the meantime, I tried to meet with Mr. Talbott as he and I had agreed, but so far we have not managed it. I believe that now he is on vacation.

In the meantime, and for your information I am enclosing a copy of my letter to Mr. Talbott of August 10, 1967, to which attached a copy of my letter to Dr. Blakeley of July 20, 1967.

I do hope that we will be able to implement our resolution for the presentation of evidence and other material which we deem necessary to round-out the full story concerning the riots, the conditions which preceded them, and perhaps our recommendations for the future.

The time is now as investigations are underway, and full rein seems to be given to the proponents of riot suppression, to those who insist the difficulties stem not even in part, from police excesses, but rather from the fact that police were inhibited from taking all the steps they thought necessary for the suppression of the riots, and to those who see no causes for the riots except the "investigation"

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August 15, 1967

Mr. Timothy Still
Director
United Community Corporation
124 Branford Place
Newark, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Still:

I am a member of the Committee of Concern and of its Legal Affairs Committee. Also, as a consultant on housing I have been conferring with Dr. Blakeley of the Newark Presbytery, at the instance of his national office, and participated in the recent meeting of the Emergency Fund Housing Committee of the Greater Newark Council of Churches at which Mr. Geyer was present and with whom I had a short discussion.

I enclose for your information a copy of my recent letter to Malcolm D. Talbott together with a copy of its enclosure which was my letter to Dr. Blakeley of July 20, 1967.

Due to schedule problems I did not have a personal discussion with Mr. Talbott which we were planning. (I understand that presently he is on vacation).

If after reading these letters, you believe that some reason exists for our getting together to discuss the situation, I would be very happy to do so. However, my schedule for the coming week is quite crowded, and I will be away for part of the coming week. However, I could possibly find sometime on either Thursday or Friday afternoon of this week. I will be out of my office most of the early part of the week, but a message left there will reach me promptly.

Sincerely,

Abraham J. Isserman

Rev. John Seabrook

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August 15, 1967

by "agitators".

I will call you or Rev. Sharper early this week to determine what next steps have been arranged for, or in contemplation.

Sincerely,

Abraham J. Isserman

cc.

Rev. H.P. Sharper

Newark Association Committee of Concern
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N. J. DIVISION
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September 1, 1967

Mr. Timothy Still, Director
United Community Corporation
124 Branford Place
Newark, New Jersey

Dear Mr. Still:

I do believe that at our luncheon yesterday, we laid the basis for further exploration of the problem of presenting accurate evidence before the various investigating committees, which would off-set and bring into balance the spate of testimony by police and other officials which has given a distorted picture of the Newark riot situation (and others) and which may lead to steps of repression, rather than to measures for the alleviation and correction of slum conditions.

As agreed I will call you next Wednesday, September 6, to fix the time of the appointment with Mr. Lofton and ourself.

You probably have not seen the report put out by the MCEOC on its part in minimizing the New Brunswick situation. I enclose a copy.

I have just finished reading "Rivers of Blood, Years of Darkness by Robert Conot " which is a story in depth of the conditions in and leading to the Watts riots. I will save this copy for you and give it to you when I see you. I think you will agree that it should get wide distribution.

I am looking forward to seeing you next week.

Sincerely,

Abraham J. Isserman

aji/nz
encl.

Mr. T. Still

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September 1, 1967

P.S.

Incidentally while I did get to Malcolm Talbott's office, it was a little later than I anticipated . Though he was there, he was in conference and I was advised that it might be lengthy. I did not wait. I am concerned over the long delay in implementing the resolutions of The Committee of Concern dealing with its participation in the presentation of evidence before the various committees and in planning its own public hearing which it resolved to hold. Perhaps after Labor Day the tempo will increase.

A.J.I.

Newark Association Committee of Concern

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November 29, 1967

Rev. Horace Sharper
Abyssinia Baptist Church
224 W. Kinny Street
Newark, New Jersey

Dear Rev. Sharper:

Enclosed, please find a copy of "Aspects of Non-Profit Motivated Housing Programs" which discusses some of the problems in the Newark situation.

I hope it will be of interest to you and I would appreciate your comment.

I enclose a copy of my covering letter to Dr. Blakeley.

I am looking forward to our meeting with Assemblyman ~~Richardson~~ *Richardson*. I am waiting for you to set the date.

I hope to see you at the December 4th meeting of the Housing Committee of the GNCC, if not sooner.

Sincerely,

ABRAHAM J. ISSERMAN

AJI:pkg
Encl.

Newark Association Committee of Concern

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November 29, 1967

Malcolm D. Talbott - Chairman
Committee of Concern
53 Washington Street
Newark, New Jersey

Dear Malcolm:

Enclosed, as promised, please find a copy of the Petition which I prepared for Local 1199 Drug and Hospital Workers Union, which is now pending before the NRB in New York City. Of special interest may be the fact that Local 1199 seeks to be designated as sponsor for a "Neighborhood" rather than for a single building or group of dwelling units.

I enclose also several copies of my comment on aspects of the housing situation in Newark. It was prepared primarily for the Greater Newark Council of Churches but I addressed it as well to the Committee of Concern because much of it is pertinent to the work of its housing committee. The section on the medical college was prepared pursuant to a discussion before the Church Committee.

I am sending copies of this comment to Messrs. Lofton and Hoffman. You are at liberty to use all or any part of these comments as you may desire. I may be able to supply you with some additional copies.

As indicated, I am willing to participate, on a volunteer basis, in the program suggested under the point "Orientation". With sufficient notice, I would be available for speaking at meetings sponsored by the Committee of Concern, either on the housing situation or other aspects of the Committee's work.

Malcolm D. Talbott - Chairman Page 2
November 29, 1967

I would appreciate your comment on the enclosures and would be willing to cooperate in any revision or extension of the "Aspects" and, of course, in assisting in any action to be taken.

Sincerely,

ABRAHAM J. ISSERMAN

AJI:pkg
Encl.

cc: Oliver Lofton, Co-Chairman
Committee of Concern

Philip E. Hoffman, Co-Chairman
Housing Committee